

Indiana AID

THE INSIDE VIEW

January 2024 / Vol 8

"September's Sparkle"

The poem below was shared by one of our detained partners.

I was born in the 9th month of the year,
My namesake is that of an Archangel.
I never cause damage or hurt to anyone,
And, shepherding my herd,
I move to one side that which gets in the way.

I'm a poet and troubadour
An incorrigible romantic,
I sing of love and heartbreak
And I fly from nest to nest.

I'm a simple dreamer
Going through life awake,
In my dreams I win wars,
And of thousands of battles I'm a Hero,
Mitigating my troubles as I go,
Only with the support of God!

I'm not the Sun nor am I a star,
but when the night stalks me,
I shine with my own light from my shining soul!

God granted me life in September
and I never forget about him...
celebrating with joy
the principal day of Saint Michael!
-Miguel Avila

Family Fun Night Fundraiser!

We have had a busy few months over here with Indiana AID! It's a hard balance that we hold; we wish that our group didn't need to exist and that immigrants would not be held in ICE detention at all. While we join others in pushing for that wish to become a reality, though, the need remains and thus we are pleased to see that our impact has grown and we've made further inroads in growing our support for the immigrants held in detention at Clay County jail.

One way that we're looking to grow our support base is through our upcoming Family Fun Night fundraiser! We're so pleased to offer this evening to our community as a way to have fun, learn more about the important work Indiana AID is doing, and to financially support the cause. As we highlight in every newsletter, we are 100% volunteer-run and all donations go directly toward the needs of our detained partners, as you can see in the monthly cost breakdown below.

We are exceedingly grateful to each person, church, and entity who has supported our group so far. We also recognize that there are so many people out there with similar hearts for immigrants in detention, so we hope that this fundraiser will be a way to spread awareness, grow more community connections, gain more volunteers, and expand the support we can provide our detained partners and their families.

So! Please join us this **Saturday, January 27th**, anytime from **6-8pm** at:

Shalom Mennonite Church
6100 E 32nd St,
Indianapolis, IN 46226

Come have fun and support a great cause! \$12 per adult, \$8 per child, kids 3 & under are free. There will be food for purchase, all activities are free. Mini games, face painting, raffles, a silent auction, and more! Please see the flyer for more info.

Monthly reports from the last few months

November

- Commissary totals: \$1,859.20
- Books: \$321.85
- Visits: 49

December

- Commissary totals: \$1,680.00
- Books: \$282.14
- Visits: 48

First half of January 2024

- Commissary totals: \$1,276.80
- Books: \$186.91
- Visits: 24

Monthly Miles to Build Connection

As we shared in our last newsletter, we finally had the chance to have a tour of the jail a few months back. We've since built on the momentum of that visit and received permission from the jail commander for monthly in-person Bible studies with the immigrant detention blocks. Indiana AID, as a volunteer group, is not faith-based, but multiple volunteers are and so we were pleased to gain this avenue to in-person visits and a way to deepen our care and support for those detained. We conducted our first Bible study in November and have gone back twice more to this point. Below, our volunteer Martha shares her experience about leading that first study:

Four volunteers went to Clay County Jail on November 11th for our first Spanish Bible study and conversation with the immigrants detained there. On the way to Brazil, we wondered what to expect. Would the men be very interested or might they participate just to have a break in the boredom? Would they have studied the Bible for years or would it be new to them? If they had studied the Bible, would they be more accustomed to a lecture style rather than the participatory study I was planning? Would we meet the men in the blocks or in the multipurpose room? We tried to approach it all with open minds and hearts.

When we arrived at Clay and said that we were volunteers with Indiana AID coming for Bible study, a staff member led us right into the first block, passing through three sets of locked doors. Only a few men were in the common area; they said that others were sleeping. They went from room to room and several more men came down from their rooms on the upper level (six rooms, each with four bunks). About ten or twelve men gathered. I started by reading Psalm 23, then, after a moment of silence, asked whether anyone had reflections to share. One man said that it meant God is always with us.

I then moved on to the main study. I read the second chapter of Matthew. I explained a little bit about Herod (who was so brutal, he had killed one of his ten wives and three of his sons) and about the wise men. I noted that Jesus and his family had to flee from violence and lived for some time as refugees in another country. Then I asked for questions or comments and a few men had comments. The other volunteers participated in the study, as well, and Jeanne closed this part with prayer. Brian, who is a pastor, offered to pray for individuals, and several men wanted that. Robin, the 4th volunteer, then talked a little about Indiana AID and the kinds of support that we can offer: commissary funds, books, legal resources, video visits, etc. Several people had questions for Robin.

At that point a jail staff person came in and took us to the second block. Here there were at least twenty men. I offered the same lesson as in the first block, and Robin interpreted for an English speaker. When it came to the opportunity for comments, we learned that one of the men was a pastor. He had been leading Bible study every night in his block. He and several others offered their testimonies of gratitude to Jesus for dying for our sins. One man said, "I have a bed to sleep in and food to eat; I am grateful for this." Here there were many who had questions for Robin about legal services and other kinds of help the men needed. One person asked if we could come every week. I explained that, at this point, we only have permission to come once a month.

After our visit we had a surge of people who wanted to have video visits, and many requests for Bibles, which we have purchased and sent. We are looking forward to our future monthly visits and Bible studies. We appreciated being able to see the folks in detention face-to-face, and they repeatedly expressed appreciation for our support and our visit.

- Martha

A Simple Hamburger

Earlier this month, as we traveled for the in-person Bible study and visit, we had an extra person join us on the trip. "M*" had previously been detained by ICE in Clay County jail, but his asylum case was granted and he'd been released a few months earlier. M asked if he could join us on the trip, not for any desire to see the jail again but because he wanted to show his gratitude to a specific person in the town.

The town where the jail is located is small and rural. There is no public transportation, so when a person is released from the jail, they have to figure out on their own their next steps. When "M" was released, he had no idea where to go and started walking down the street. He saw a woman and her daughter who looked like they may speak Spanish. He approached them to ask if he could borrow the woman's phone to call someone. She said yes (but with the warning to not run off with the phone or she'd start yelling). M expressed his thanks and called someone to make the hour drive to pick him up. The woman then shared that she owned a nearby restaurant and invited him to come wait in the warmth. She gave him a simple hamburger and something to drink, and M shared with us later how much those simple kindnesses meant to him.

When we arrived in the town, M headed to the restaurant and we headed in to the jail. When we were done, we joined M at the restaurant and met the owners - the woman and her husband. We shared about Indiana AID, what we do, and why we were in the jail that day. We gave our own thanks for the kindness they'd shown M. They offered to be that safe place for others, if a person is released and needs a place to wait, to make a phone call, or maybe get a hamburger.

In a world of hard, isn't it wonderful to pause and highlight the moments of good?

Contact Us

- Email: IndianaAID.contact@gmail.com
- Phone (voicemail only): 317-721-4044

Follow Us

- Website: <https://www.indianaaid.org>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/IndianaAID/>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/indianaaid/>

Volunteer

Currently, our greatest needs are for...

- Spanish-speaking visitation partners
- Visitation partners who speak languages other than English and Spanish
- Financial support/fundraising experience
- Website and social media specialists

Donate



<https://www.indianaaid.org/donate>

- Indiana AID is a volunteer group funded 100% on donations. Please consider a tax-deductible donation via the QR code or link above.
- Shalom Mennonite Church is our fiscal sponsor - you will be taken to their site's giving page where you will first select an amount to give and then choose the fund where you would like your money to go, "Indiana AID Fund." None of the money donated to Indiana AID goes to the church's budget.
- You can also donate by sending a check to the church with "Indiana AID" in the memo line.
 - Shalom Mennonite Church
6100 E 32nd Street, Indianapolis, IN 46226